

THIRTY-THIRD CONGRESS.

MONDAY, APRIL 24, 1854.

IN SENATE.

The following memorials and petitions were presented and appropriately referred:

By Mr. EVERETT: From Bingham Pierce and others, members of the American Association for the Promotion of Science, asking Congress to make an appropriation to enable Prof. Mitchell, of Cincinnati, to construct a machine for observing right ascensions and declinations by the aid of magnetism.

Accompanying the memorial was a report from a committee, appointed for the examination of the subject, which says that the apparatus contains all the professional elements in regard to simplicity, accuracy, facility and dispatch. It is a fair specimen of ingenious contrivance, and the best proof of its superiority is the fact that, notwithstanding the roughness of construction which the inventor has been forced to submit to by his limited resources, it yields in the accuracy of its results the most perfect specimen of skillful workmanship.

Mr. E. spoke of the importance of this invention to the cause of science, as promising great practical utility in its application, and really reflecting great credit on the country. He did not know what committee to send it to, as the matter did not seem to be within the jurisdiction of any of the standing committees of the body, and he would therefore move its reference to a select committee of five.

The motion was agreed to, and the select committee will be appointed by the Chair.

By Mr. RUSK: From Robert Mills, architect and engineer, proposing a new plan of railroad for transporting the mails of the United States, and troops and military stores.

The memorialist goes into a calculation to show that if the Government would build the road the saving in expense of transporting the mail to California would pay its cost in five years and secure the free passage of the mail for all time to come.

The advantages claimed for this plan of road are its cost, facility of construction, efficiency, safety, and high speed, freedom from all the mishaps and inconveniences of the travel of the present railroads. Its cost will not be one-fourth of the present roads. Its facility of construction is so great that it may be accomplished in three years, and it will be a great improvement in effecting its destiny, viz. the passage of the mail, &c., great indeed. 4th. Its safety in travel, from either running off the track or being subject to any ground obstruction, cessant; and 5th. Its capacity for high speed so great that one hundred miles an hour may be accomplished.

Between these advantages, this system of railway will effect the great object of establishing a line of telegraph across to the Pacific, under circumstances of security which no other plan can effect.

By Mr. HUNTER: From several intelligent and highly respectable mechanics of the District of Columbia, asking that if the homestead bill granting land should be passed that there be paid out of the Treasury \$200 to them. They express their belief that the conditions of the homestead bill will be evaded, and that the only effect of the bill will be to enable the loafer and speculator to pick out good and fertile lands, which the government has acquired in less than five years make valuable, and thus serve to exonerate an exorbitant price from, or drive further into the wilderness, the bona fide settler who seeks to purchase, pay for, and improve the public domain. It goes on to say that the signers are not paupers, and ask no favors from Government, but they demand an act of justice and right. If the bill is to pass, that a clause be inserted authorizing mechanics possessed of no other tools to draw on the national treasury for \$200 to assist them in purchasing the implements of their profession.

By Mr. BUTLER: From certain keepers of public houses in the city of Washington, requesting the Committee on the District of Columbia to instruct the Common Council to repeal the ordinance compelling restaurants and eating-houses to be closed at midnight, complaining that many who are compelled to labor all night by this prohibition are deprived of the right and privilege of obtaining employment when they desire to do so. They suggest that the law is unconstitutional and anti-republican, and does not even smell democratic; and they submit whether, if they have the power to compel a closing of doors at midnight, they would not the same power to direct their close at 8 o'clock.

By Mr. SEWARD: From the citizens of the United States protesting against the repeal of the laws which prohibit the sale of intoxicating liquors, asking that measures may be taken to secure to them the right of civil and religious liberty while travelling abroad.

Also, from the heirs and legal representatives of John Nelson, asking compensation for the services of his ancestor, in remuneration for losses sustained during the Revolutionary war.

Also, from C. M. Clarke, asking remuneration for losses sustained by her father under a contract to furnish muskets.

By Mr. ALLEN: From citizens of the Rhode Island militia, asking remuneration for services in the last war with Great Britain.

By Mr. FISH: From the Marine Society of New York, asking that ships and vessels of over one hundred and fifty tons, clearing at the custom-house, be furnished with two or more boys.

By Mr. WINSTON: From John Makin, a pilot, in relation to a claim to salvage for relieving the United States frigate Saratoga while in distress off the harbor of Savannah.

By Mr. SUMNER: Memorials from the Mayor of Boston, from citizens of Massachusetts and of New Hampshire, asking that the bill for the relief of the American Frigate Saratoga be passed.

By Mr. FOOT: From Sherman Pierce, asking a pension.

By Mr. CHASE: From citizens of Ohio in favor of cheap postage.

By Mr. JOHNSON: From citizens of Arkansas in favor of a mail route from Hot Springs to Owenville, in that State.

Numerous petitions were presented in the shape of protests against the passage of the Nebraska bill or violation of the Missouri compromise.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES.

Mr. BRODHEAD, from the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, submitted a report, accompanied by a bill for the relief of Joseph Knack.

Also, from the Committee of Claims, asking to be discharged from the further consideration of the memorial of Charles Gordon, and that it be referred to the Committee on Public Lands; which was agreed to.

Also, from the same committee, to which was referred House bill for the relief of Grafton Baker, reported it back without amendment, and asked its immediate consideration.

Also, from the Committee on Territories, to which was referred the joint resolution from the House of Representatives authorizing the accounting officers of the Treasury to adjust the expenses of the Board of Commissioners appointed by the Territorial Legislature of Oregon to prepare a code of laws; also, to adjust the expense of collecting and printing certain laws and archives of the Territory of Oregon, reported it back without amendment and asked its immediate consideration.

No objection having been made, the joint resolution was read a second time and passed.

Mr. DOUGLAS, from the same committee, asked to be discharged from the further consideration of the memorial of the Territorial Legislature of New Mexico, respecting a military post at Fort Atkinson; relative to land claims under Mexican grants; and in relation to Indian depredations as not pertaining to the Committee on Territories; and they were referred to appropriate committees.

Mr. JONES, from the Committee on Pensions, asked to be discharged from the further consideration of the petition of the heirs of George H. Moore, of Frances Depriest, and of D. M. Lewis, and that they be referred to the Committee on Public Lands; which was agreed to.

Mr. CLAY, from the Committee on Pensions, to which was referred several petitions from seamen and marines asking an increase of pension, submitted a report, accompanied by a general bill to increase the pension of seamen and marines.

[This bill increases the pension to eight dollars per month for disabilities of the highest degree, provided that all change of rates of pension are to take effect from the passage of this act. All disabilities occurring in the line of duty entitle the parties to a pension.]

Mr. CLAY also submitted a memorial, asking to be discharged from the further consideration of the petition of Eliza G. Townsend, Arabella Riley, Minerva Cattlett, and Nannie Deiman.

Mr. DODGE, of Iowa, from the Committee on Public Lands, to which was referred the bill granting land to the State of Alabama to aid in the construction of a railroad from some point within the boundary line of the State of Alabama to a point on the boundary line of the States of Alabama and Florida, reported it back, and asked its immediate consideration; which was agreed to, and the bill was passed.

Mr. FITZPATRICK introduced a bill granting the right of way and making a grant of land to the State of Alabama, to the city of Mobile.

RESUME OF THE CREW OF THE SAN FRANCISCO.

On motion by Mr. SHIELDS, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill making remuneration to those who boarded the steamer San Francisco.

Mr. GWIN submitted an amendment as a substitute for the original resolution, the effect of which was to give gold medals to the parties named, and authorizing the President to reward the officers and crew of the vessel

commanded by them by giving gold, silver, and bronze medals with suitable devices &c.

This amendment led to considerable discussion, in which Messrs. GWIN, SHIELDS, HAMLIN, SLIDELL, MALLORY, and others participated.

The question was then taken on Mr. GWIN's amendment, and decided in the affirmative, as follows:

YEAS—Messrs. Atchison, Butler, Clay, Dawson, Dodge of Iowa, Evans, Fish, Gwin, Hamlin, Jones, Mallory, Sumner, Thompson, Toombs, and Williams—21.

NAYS—Messrs. Allen, Badger, Bell, Bright, Brown, Cooper, Everett, Fish, Foot, Geyer, Hamlin, Jones of Iowa, Mallory, Sumner, Thompson, Toombs, and Williams—16.

Mr. WIN then moved to strike out from the resolution the appropriation of \$100,000 and insert \$50,000.

This motion, after a brief discussion, was decided in the affirmative, as follows:

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By Mr. GWIN: From the widow of Capt. George C. Westcott, of the U. S. Army, asking to be placed on the pension list.

By Mr. JONES, of Tennessee: From John P. Moses, of New Hampshire, asking such action on the indigent pension bill as will secure its passage, irrespective of the vote.

By Mr. STUART: A document in favor of establishing certain mail routes in the mineral region of Lake Superior.

By Mr. EVANS: Two petitions from persons professing the Jewish religion, in favor of religious toleration being secured to American citizens abroad.

Several petitions were presented by Messrs. SEWARD, SUMNER, and others, in the shape of remonstrances against the passage of the Nebraska bill and violation of the Missouri compromise; which were laid on the table.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES.

Mr. HAMLIN, from the Committee on Commerce, submitted a report, accompanied by a bill for the relief of Geo. Bennett, of New Hampshire.

Mr. GWIN, from the Committee on Naval Affairs, asked to be discharged from the further consideration of the memorial of E. A. F. Lavalette, of the U. S. Navy, and that it be referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations; which was agreed to.

Also, from the same committee, asked to be discharged from the further consideration of the petition of Michael H. Smith, of New York, asking to be referred to the Committee on Pensions; which was agreed to.

Mr. NORRIS, from the Committee on the District of Columbia, asked to be discharged from the further consideration of the several memorials of citizens of Washington asking that Pennsylvania avenue may be paved with flag stones, which was agreed to.

Mr. JONES, of Iowa, from the Committee on Pensions, submitted a report, accompanied by a bill for the relief of Urban Scott.

PORTRAITS OF THE PRESIDENTS.

Mr. PEARCE, from the Committee on the Library, reported a bill to authorize the purchase of portraits of the first five Presidents of the United States, and asked its immediate consideration.

Mr. HUNTER, I have no objection to considering the bill, provided the Senate will agree to postpone it if it gives time to debate. I wish to dispose of the Indian appropriation bill to-day.

Mr. PEARCE. If I find that the bill gives rise to any debate of more than a few minutes' duration, I will consent to its postponement.

The bill was read a second time, and considered as in Committee of the Whole.

It proposes to authorize the President to purchase and place in the Executive Mansion a series of portraits of the first five Presidents of the United States, by Gilbert Stuart, and to appropriate \$5,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary, for the purpose.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. President, there are five portraits, being those of the first five Presidents of the United States, which have been offered to the Government. They were all painted by Gilbert Stuart, whom the Senate knows to have been one of the most eminent artists of the age. The portraits are copies of the original, which are paintings of great value, as is certified by a number of gentlemen who are themselves artists or amateurs of great skill and judgment. All the portraits of Stuart are highly valued, as we know. Very lately a portrait of George Washington, painted by him, was purchased, I believe, by the Boston Athenaeum for \$1,000. Those portraits are now insured at the sum of \$5,000. They are believed to form the only complete series of portraits of the first five Presidents by Stuart now in existence. There was a series of the same Presidents, by the same artist, which were deposited in the Library of Congress a few years ago, but they were destroyed by the fire which consumed the Library in 1852. This is probably the only opportunity which the Government will have of acquiring the portraits of the Presidents by such a master.

The committee thought they would be appropriate ornaments to the Executive Mansion, and fitting testimonials of the great men who served their country so well and so ably in the office of Chief Magistrate. The committee had no doubt that Congress would readily furnish the means for their purchase, and desire to see them placed in the President's house.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. President, I think myself it is very desirable that this appropriation should be made, and I shall vote for the bill with great cheerfulness. I should, however, vote for it with much more cheerfulness if the committee had thought it expedient to make its provisions more extensive. This may perhaps be the last opportunity we shall have to obtain the five portraits, by which the committee makes provision. I suppose, with the lapse of years, that difficulty will increase, and it will also increase in regard to those not provided for. It seems to me that the bill should be so amended as to include all the Presidents, or at least all the ex-presidents, for there might be an opportunity in including the President for the time being. But I certainly should be glad to see the Executive Mansion adorned with the portraits of all the preceding Presidents, and if there is no impropriety in the thing, I would also include the present President. I think the portraits of all our Chief Magistrates ought to be in the Executive Mansion, and I believe that the committee makes provision. I suppose, with the lapse of years, that difficulty will increase, and it will also increase in regard to those not provided for. It seems to me that the bill should be so amended as to include all the Presidents, or at least all the ex-presidents, for there might be an opportunity in including the President for the time being. But I certainly should be glad to see the Executive Mansion adorned with the portraits of all the preceding Presidents, and if there is no impropriety in the thing, I would also include the present President. I think the portraits of all our Chief Magistrates ought to be in the Executive Mansion, and I believe that the committee makes provision. I suppose, with the lapse of years, that difficulty will increase, and it will also increase in regard to those not provided for. It seems to me that the bill should be so amended as to include all the Presidents, or at least all the ex-presidents, for there might be an opportunity in including the President for the time being. But I certainly should be glad to see the Executive Mansion adorned with the portraits of all the preceding Presidents, and if there is no impropriety in the thing, I would also include the present President. I think the portraits of all our Chief Magistrates ought to be in the Executive Mansion, and I believe that the committee makes provision. I suppose, with the lapse of years, that difficulty will increase, and it will also increase in regard to those not provided for. It seems to me that the bill should be so amended as to include all the Presidents, or at least all the ex-presidents, for there might be an opportunity in including the President for the time being. But I certainly should be glad to see the Executive Mansion adorned with the portraits of all the preceding Presidents, and if there is no impropriety in the thing, I would also include the present President. I think the portraits of all our Chief Magistrates ought to be in the Executive Mansion, and I believe that the committee makes provision. I suppose, with the lapse of years, that difficulty will increase, and it will also increase in regard to those not provided for. It seems to me that the bill should be so amended as to include all the Presidents, or at least all the ex-presidents, for there might be an opportunity in including the President for the time being. But I certainly should be glad to see the Executive Mansion adorned with the portraits of all the preceding Presidents, and if there is no impropriety in the thing, I would also include the present President. I think the portraits of all our Chief Magistrates ought to be in the Executive Mansion, and I believe that the committee makes provision. I suppose, with the lapse of years, that difficulty will increase, and it will also increase in regard to those not provided for. It seems to me that the bill should be so amended as to include all the Presidents, or at least all the ex-presidents, for there might be an opportunity in including the President for the time being. But I certainly should be glad to see the Executive Mansion adorned with the portraits of all the preceding Presidents, and if there is no impropriety in the thing, I would also include the present President. I think the portraits of all our Chief Magistrates ought to be in the Executive Mansion, and I believe that the committee makes provision. I suppose, with the lapse of years, that difficulty will increase, and it will also increase in regard to those not provided for. It seems to me that the bill should be so amended as to include all the Presidents, or at least all the ex-presidents, for there might be an opportunity in including the President